

LGAT STRATEGIC PLANNING

Context Setting

August 2019



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Looking Back

Two Years Ago

- An intense State Government reform agenda which included significant changes to:
 - Planning,
 - A targeted review of the LG Act,
 - Feasibility studies into mergers and resource sharing; and
 - A myriad of policy interfaces with Local Government (cat management, building, emergency management, housing, etc).
- Pressure on council financial sustainability through freezing the indexation of Financial Assistance Grants.
- Poor public perception of councils due in large part to the Boards of Inquiry at Huon Valley and Glenorchy City, and the move to put those councils in administration.
- A proposed hostile takeover of TasWater requiring LGAT to run the first anti-government campaign in decades.

Achievements

- Reputation of local government has been largely restored
- Council ownership of TasWater has been retained

Reactive to proactive shift:

- Leading the agenda on planning, waste management and sector reform (21st Century Councils Project)

Policy Outcomes

Outcomes in response to a number of policy areas:

- Review of councilor allowances, free camping, Code of Conduct
- Planning reform
- Commitment to IPlan Phase 2
- Dedicated points of contact for councils implementing visitor accommodation and building legislative changes
- New legislation on Short Stay Visitor Accommodation
- Workforce development activities

Achievements

Sector

Elections

- Strong community engagement in the 2018 Local Government elections.
- A record 481 candidates stood for election, 34% of those women and the voter response rate was the highest since 1996
- Candidate information sessions and online resources and induction and resources for newly elected members.
- Implementation of a Peer Advisor program for newly elected members.

Professional Development and Sector Resources

- Growth in professional development offerings for candidates, elected members and officers:
- Model health and wellbeing plans, videos describing practical approaches to planning and playground builds.
- Workforce Behaviours Toolkit, Delegations and Compliance tools, Model Credit Card Policy

Communications

- New communications strategies:
- Better Councils, Better Communities television advertising and webpages
- Stand for Council/Vote for Council television and social media campaign
- New branding for LGTas and Annual Report
- Increased media presence through proactive op eds and media releases and meetings with media

Achievements

Financial

Procurement

- Now leveraging sector savings approaching \$2m per annum through procurement services

Policy and Project Funding

- Funding to support planning reform (State and regional)
- \$300k for Health and Wellbeing Project
- Funding for Municipal Emergency Management Guidelines
- Funding and resourcing at a regional level to support councils in relation to cat management
- Successful advocacy to the Australian Energy Regulator on public lighting pricing which has resulted in estimated savings of over \$7m to the sector
- TasWater Dividends - \$20m per annum

Advocacy with and through ALGA

- Through ALGA ensured the indexation of FAGs was restored, representing approximately \$20 million to Tas LG Sector

Global / national trends

Urbanisation

Urbanisation & decline of the regions

- In 1960, 1/3 of the world population lived in urban areas, today it is 55% and by 2050 it will be 68%
- 2/3 of Australians live in a capital city (40% in Sydney or Melbourne).

Ageing Population

Ageing population

- The number of people in Australia over the age of 65 has steadily increased in the last century, from 1 in 25 in 1911 to 1 in 6 people in 2016.

Digital Technology

Digital technology

- Mobile users 67%
- Internet users 57%
- Active social media users 45%.
- 1 in 2 Australians use Facebook and YouTube

Climate Change

Climate change and natural disasters

- Implications for settlement and infrastructure planning
- Adaptation vs mitigation
- Food security
- Climate migration

Tasmanian Trends

Growth Pressures

Workforce issues

Reform and more reform

Global / national trends plus:

Unequal Growth Pressures

- Population decline and aging, reliance on immigration in some areas
- Housing affordability and congestion issues in some regions
- Visitor economy pressures and need for tourism infrastructure
- Waste management and resource recovery

Workforce Issues

- Workforce is ageing and lack of skilled professionals to fill roles – across all industries
- Competition for skilled construction workers Local/State/Private
- Regional development a priority but skills shortages can be more acute in regions

Continued focus on reform

- State Government intervention is at the level of regulatory reform not structural
- There will be continued demand for Local Government reform but poorly articulated links between perceived problems and desired outcomes

What does this mean for LG

Complexity

High Expectations

Focus on engagement

- Complex systems with interconnected issues. eg traffic, housing
- New cohort of younger, more diverse representatives - want a more inclusive approach and meaningful engagement with communities. New leadership preference and styles are emerging.
- Not everyone has the same understanding of Local Government roles, this can lead to in-council or council/community tensions.
- Elected members more often raising issues that have traditionally been outside the remit of Local Government. Community expectations mixed: some think councils should be involved in everything v others think it's just roads, rates, rubbish - regardless expectations need to be managed.
- Review of the Act - principles and functions of LG likely to be broader. Greater call for genuine community engagement emerging.
- Different levels of engagement and approaches among councils - engagement is shifting but council systems aren't catching up

What does this mean for LG

*Place based
approaches*

*Pressure on
resources*

*Not one size fits
all*

- Evidence supports place based approaches, particularly to health and social policy but place-based is done ad hoc within councils - there's a lot of talk but not necessarily a strategic approach or focus
- Tension between regulatory role and overarching representation
- Resourcing continues to be stretched. The broadening of role has implications for resourcing – cost shift?
- Councils do not have the rate base for new ways of working and this will be exacerbated with ageing and population decline e.g. wellbeing
- Funding models need to change - grants result in fragmentation or duplication of effort
- Rural and urban councils have different budgets, resourcing capacity, staff capability and community needs.

Some questions for the future

What future needs?

Digital opportunities?

Resourcing?

LGAT Role?

- What will communities need LG to be delivering ongoing?
- What are the barriers, risks and opportunities related to innovation and digital technology?
- How do communities want to be engaged and how can councils realistically support local democracy?
- How do we find the balance between local/place-based policy and services requirements versus a push towards larger councils or regional organisations resource sharing?
- How do we properly embed shared services?
- How do we ensure sustainable resourcing in the face of significant population and functional change?
- Is LGAT's role as outlined currently in legislation reflective of member needs?
- What other funding sources for LGAT – procurement, projects, partnerships, fee for service?
- What else?

Suggested Priorities 2019-2020

	Carry forward (revised)	Remove	Add
<i>2019 – 20: business as usual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the waste management reform agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further build sector resources and support particularly for new elected members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the 21st Century Councils Project
<i>Commit to current plan until July 2021</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the sector through the next stages of Local Government <i>legislation</i> reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position the Tasmanian Local Government agenda in the Federal Election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with councils and stakeholders to address identified workforce capacity gaps.
<i>Map new annual priorities March 2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Support councils in implementing the planning reform agenda</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the financial and asset management in councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Community Health and Wellbeing Project.
<i>Full strategic planning late 2020 with 4-year plans in future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the good work of Local Government to the broader Community <i>Deliver a range of high-quality training and events</i> Continue to expand the Procurement Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a refreshed statewide community satisfaction survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver equitable rating outcomes through securing legislative amendments

2021 onwards

Facilitating change across Local Government

Building Local Government's reputation

Fostering collaboration

Promoting financial sustainability

Underpinning Local Government capacity and capability to deliver.

- The Local Government sector is likely to experience the most rapid change it has ever experienced over the next 5 years.
- What is the role for LGAT in supporting councils through this future?
- Will LGAT's focus areas look the same?

Next Steps

- Agree priorities for 2019-20
- Foreshadow emerging priorities for 2020 and beyond – possibly discussion items for future GMC meetings
- LGAT staff to update Strategic Plan for out of session endorsement and circulation to Members
- LGAT staff to prepare a 2019-20 work plan aligned with agreed priorities
- LGAT to map work already progressed against priorities as progress report for next GMC